MR CHAIRMAN The Foreign Minister is on his feet

SHRI H D DEVE GOWDA One minute Sir

Whatever the hon Member Shri Raja Sekhara Reddy has expressed I do not want to react to that Every State Government s financial position is one and the same Do not get under the impression that the financial position of Andhra is bad and the other States are financially very strong *(Interruptions)* We know what it is including the Central Government *(Interruptions)* When the previous Government was there why was it turned down? Do not unnecessarily try to make politics in such a very important decision

Your goodself have said that the Prime Minister has not made an appeal For the first time I have made an appeal throught the electronic media through the print media to the entire country — the State Governments non-governmental organizations and the financial institutions which has appeared in all the Papers I do not want to say Sir that within three days I sent my one month s salary and I did not want to say this And I do not want to take any credit for this I sent the cheque of my salary within three days and I have requested my people also For God s sake please do not make politics out of this The other States are also there When we want to think of the country as a whole we should not try to mix politics here *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE DUMDUM Each Member of our Party has already donated Rs 5 000 *(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN Now I think we have had a very detailed reply on this subject

Shri Jagannathji please sit down

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN I would now request the hon Foreign Minister to make a Statement on Situation in Afghanistan

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN Please let us have some order in the House

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN Yes Mr Foreign Minister

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16 49 hrs

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Situation in Afghanistan

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I K GUJRAL) Sir recent developments in Afghanistan have attracted wide attention and evoked concern all over The fall of Kabul to the Taliban forces on September 27th was a turning point It led to the brutal murder of former President Najibullah and his brother It was all the more shocking because they were under the charge of the UN which was honour bound to protect them Both the Government of India and I myself have expressed our revulsion at this tragic development

The pursuit of obscurantist doctrine by the Taliban leadership and the consequent denial of human rights especially the rights of women have been extensively condemned The implications of these events have been assessed especially the risk of an adverse impact on India s security We continue to follow developments in Afghanistan very closely and evaluate their implications for us

The situation in Afghanistan continues to be fluid The opposing parties facing each other in battle are the Taliban and the forces of the Supreme Council for the Defence of Afghanistan (SCDA) (which comprises the forces of the Government of General Rashid Dostum and of Hizb e Wahdat leader Karim Khalili) Fronts in the vicinity of Kabul and in the western part of Afghanistan continue to be tense and witness sporadic activity After a period of quiet there are recent reports of renewed heavy fighting north of Kabul The on-set of winter will increase the difficulties faced by the people and enhance their need for humanitarian assistance

We have maintained contact with the legitimate Afghan Government led by President Rabbani Though we had to withdraw our Embassy on 27th September 1996 the Afghan Embassy continues to function in Delhi As Hon Members know recently President Rabbani met our Prime Minister during his visit to Rome for the Food Summit We also sent a delegation led by Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs to Mazar-e-Sharif on November 10th to meet Gen Rashid Dostum We remain in contact with countries who take an interest in Afghan affairs There is recognition that India has vital interest in Afghanistan and therefore a role to assist in the restoration of peace and tranquility there As is known India was invited by Iran to participate in a Regional Conference organised by them in Teheran in October Unfortunately Pakistan chose to oppose our participation but in the face of Iranian refusal to oblige it did not participate in the Conference

Subsequently the UN Secretary General had convened a meeting of senior officials and experts from 19 countries who has knowledge interest and influence regarding Afghanistan India was invited and we participated in the meeting which was held on the 18th of November India has also been invited to take part in a UN sponsored international forum on assistance to Afghanistan We have confirmed our participation The venue of this conference has not yet been finalised

The initial proposal to hold it in Peshawar had to be given up because of Pakistan s objection to India s participation

The significant elements of our position on the Afghanistan situation are

> India fully supports the unity independence territorial integrity and sovereignty of Afghanistan These are essential for the well being of the Afghan people and given Afghanistan s strategic location for the peace and stability of the entire region

A cessation of foreign interference in Afghanistan is an essential pre-requisite for the resolution of the situation

There could be no military solution The situation has to be resolved through peaceful discussions and negotiations between Afghan parties A special responsibility devolves on Afghan leaders to forsake the path of confrontation and conflict and pursue peace which will lead to reconciliation renewal and reconstruction in Afghanistan

We fully support the efforts of the UNSG and those of his special representative in bringing peace to Afghanistan The UN Special Mission on Afghanistan has pursued its task with patience and commitment India is prepared to play its full part in supporting their efforts

The cessation of violence and armed hostilities and the demilitarisation of Kabul would provide the right conditions for the political process These should be actively pursued

A cessation of arms supply to Afghanistan is required The effective implementation of this idea would have to be carefully worked out

The growth in drug trafficking and terrorism which is a result of conflict in Afghanistan are matters of concern

We have been greatly disturbed and distressed at the denial of human rights especially those of women which have been recently witnessed in Afghanistan We support the denunciation of these practices contained in the UN Security Council Resolution 1076 The Resolution denounces the discrimination against girls and women and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Afghanistan and notes with deep concern possible repercussions on international relief and reconstruction programmes in Afghanistan

17.00 hrs.

In this context I must make special mention of the brutal and abhorrent murder of former President Najibullah and his brother As hon Members are aware the family of former President Najibullah has been in India since 1992 While personally condoling the death I have conveyed to Mrs Najibullah that while she would naturally be taking decisions about her future she will always be an honoured guest among us and we will do all that is required to look after welfare of the family

Even during the uncertain conditions we had continued humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan which we will continue This has been in the form of medicines foodstuff and clothing We also conducted a month long camp in Kabul in August-September 1996 for fitting artificial limbs on persons who had lost their limbs mostly on account of land mines Over 1100 such limbs were fitted in the camp

We have recently seen credible reports in the international media on the Taliban handing over terrorist training facilities to the Harkat ul Ansar It is reported that at these training camps Pakistani and other youth are being trained for terrorist activities in Kashmir I may assure the hon Members that the Government of India and the people of our country continue to sustain their vigil and are taking all necessary steps to safeguard the country s security

Our interaction with Afghanistan is constructive and positive It is not directed against any other country Its purpose is to assist in bringing peace and stability to a country with which we have civilization affinities and are bound by ties of brotherhood friendship and cooperation

17 02 hrs

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) Need to expedite opening of LPG outlets in Jhansi and Lalitpur districts of U.P.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (Jhansi) I have come to know that an advertisement with regard to opening of an additional LPG agency of Bharat Petroleum in Lalitpur under Jhansi district of U P which is under my constituency and sanction for opening L P G outlets in Mehrauni and Talbehat towns has already been accorded The decision to open three LPG agencies in Jhansi city and one LPG agency in Ranipur under Jhansi district during the annual plan 1994-95 has been taken and an adverstisement has also been given in this regard Besides Baruasagar Chirgaon Moth Gursarai and Bargaon cities have also included in the annual plan for the year 1995-96 for opening L P G agencies